

Kelsey Hustedt

JrCOSTEP – Summer 2005
University of Wisconsin-
Eau Claire
Fort Defiance Arizona Service Unit-
Navajo Area IHS



My name is Kelsey Hustedt. I am a senior in the Environmental & Public Health program at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire. This summer I was stationed in Fort Defiance, Arizona, working with the Office of Environmental Health & Engineering (OEH&E).

On my first day at OEH&E, I was greeted with smiles and friendly faces, and knew immediately that I would love it there. My preceptor, District Sanitarian David Tibbs, District Injury Prevention Specialist Delores Becenti, the field sanitarians Elvina Clark-Joe and Bennie Joe, and the rest of the staff made me feel like a member of the Fort Defiance family. The atmosphere at OEH&E was comfortable and fun but also very professional, which made it a wonderful work environment.

I primarily worked with Delores Becenti and Elvina Clark-Joe throughout my COSTEP. With their guidance, I was able to experience many aspects of Environmental Health. During the summer, I assisted with kitchen inspections, food stand surveys at the Navajo Nation Fair, food handler's trainings, and even conducted my own training. As part of the Navajo Nation Fair, we held a Bicycle Safety Rodeo/Skateboard Contest to teach children how to be safe while riding their bicycles and skateboarding. We provided helmets and elbow/knee pads, and fit them to each child. There was also an obstacle course and prizes given to the safest participants. My favorite part of the COSTEP was the Rabies Clinics. We held 10 clinics all over the Service Unit, where we inoculated hundreds of dogs and cats. I took part in many activities this summer and was able to use the concepts learned in school in a real-world setting.

When I was not working, I was either traveling to a National Park, shopping for jewelry, spending time with my new friends, watching the prairie dogs, or playing with my newly adopted rez puppy. One weekend, I met up with five of the Santa Fe and Taos area COSTEPs and went whitewater rafting down the Rio Grande in Taos, New Mexico. There was always something to do and explore.

My COSTEP in Fort Defiance was a once in a lifetime opportunity. I have learned new skills and have experienced new things that I will be able to take with me and incorporate into a future career. I believe I am on the right career path, and hope there is a place with IHS for me. I highly recommend a COSTEP to anyone interested in pursuing an Environmental & Public Health career.